

Current Topics

Cardinal Manning's View

An esteemed Queensland correspondent furnishes us with the following quotation, which is particularly apropos to the present controversy on the education question. 'Cardinal Manning,' he writes, 'argued thus: "All who pay rates ought to share in the benefit of the rates. To compel payment and to exclude from participation is political injustice. And to offer participation upon conditions known beforehand to be of impossible acceptance, is wilful and deliberate exclusion."' The bearing of this observation, as Captain Bunsby used to remark, lies in the application of it; and its application to the action and attitude of the Bible in State Schools League is sufficiently obvious.

The League's Inconsistency

It is as true in this year of grace 1913 as it was in old Samuel Butler's day that

We are best of all led to
Men's principles by what they do.

The representatives of the Bible in State Schools League have made many fair professions of fair principles, but they have fallen woefully short of justice and straightforwardness in the application of them. Here is a glaring specimen of their inconsistency, and one, too, in connection with what they profess to regard as a fundamental 'principle.' In one of his latest speeches, delivered the other day at Christchurch, Canon Garland is reported (*Christchurch Press*, June 9) as laying it down, quite rightly, that this matter of the religious education of the children is a parental question. 'We are going to stand or fall on this system,' declared the speaker, 'that the parents shall be free to have the right to control the moral and religious training of their children. They have also got a practical right because they are paying for it.' The same perfectly sound principle was enunciated in the course of the agitation which preceded the granting of the referendum in Queensland. Dr. Donaldson, Anglican Archbishop of Brisbane and head of the Bible League in Queensland, declared at a public meeting in Brisbane: 'The proposals of the Bible in State Schools League are just, because they are founded on the unassailable principle that the parent has the right to say whether the child shall be brought up with religion or not'; and further affirmed 'that the bedrock of the whole question was that what the parent wishes should be the law of the teacher.' (*Brisbane Courier*, September 18, 1906). We rise to ask the very natural question: What provision is made in the League proposals for the application of this principle to the case of Catholic parents, and of Jewish parents, and of Unitarian parents? And the answer is, None whatever. The Jewish parent is told that if he cannot accept the Bible lessons on the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ—which are to him sheer blasphemy—he must make provision elsewhere for the religious teaching he desires, and pay for at his own expense, besides bearing his share of the cost of the League's scheme. The Unitarian parent is in like case. As is well known, Catholic parents, while willing to submit to State control—and therefore claiming State recognition—in regard to the secular teaching, desire for their children their own religious teaching and religious atmosphere in their own schools; and the League advocates—the men who are posing as the champions of the rights of parents—are forever telling us that this is the very thing they are out to prevent! Truly, consistency is a jewel—a veritable Koh-i-noor,—and one which may be looked for in vain in League actions and utterances.

Challenge and Counter-Challenge

Challenges on the subject of the Bible-in-schools question have been floating about somewhat freely of late. At the recent meeting in the Garrison Hall Dean Fitchett issued the following challenge to the teachers:

'Let the teachers appoint two of their most intelligent and most trusted teachers and send them as a Commission to inquire what the state of things was in Australia, and if they would be content to abide by the result the League would pay the expenses.' As we have already explained, this is an entirely useless challenge, for even if the two teachers returned perfectly satisfied as to the working of the system in Australia, it would by no means follow, from the teachers' point of view, that the system would work equally well in New Zealand, where the teachers are appointed, not as in Australia by a single central authority, but by elective local bodies, amongst whom religious bias would quickly make itself evident if the teachers were required to administer Bible lessons. In response to Dean Fitchett's challenge, Mr. John Caughley, President of the N.Z. Educational Institute, wrote as follows to the *Dunedin Evening Star* of June 24: 'As a teacher I willingly accept the dean's challenge, provided he will also abide by the result. In addition, I will challenge the dean to stand by his statement: "If the scheme advocated by the League required the teachers to teach religion he (the Dean) would not be a member of the League nor on their platform."' In a lengthy article in the *Star* of the same date—which we reproduce elsewhere in this issue—Mr. Caughley explains that in accepting the Dean's challenge he does not consider it necessary to visit Australia, but holds that the challenge can be answered here in New Zealand from official and reliable evidence—largely supplied by the League itself—already available. He then proceeds to make a categorical indictment against the League's proposals; and challenges the Dean to reply seriatim and without evasion to the points and charges made. More than a week has elapsed, but so far there has been no reply from the Dean.

*

In the leading columns of its issue of June 26 the *Star* makes a further suggestion on the subject. 'Our own suggestion,' it says, 'in respect to the Dean's challenge is that it could be accepted in spirit and be satisfied by a public debate between two accredited champions in the Garrison Hall of this city. Such a debate would arouse the keenest interest, would attract a great audience, and would be besides an intellectual treat. We have no authority for using his name in this relation, but if Mr. Caughley, a representative teacher both in the State and the Presbyterian Church Sunday schools, could see his way to champion the existing education system, and the Very Rev. Dean Fitchett take the other side, there need be no fear of lack of public interest.' So far there has been no response of any kind from anybody to this thoroughly sensible and pertinent suggestion.

A Weird Appointment

The Government have inaugurated the newly-opened session of Parliament by making five 'calls' to the Upper House, the new legislators being Mr. John Duthie, Sir W. R. Russell, Mr. C. A. C. Hardy, Mr. W. G. Nicholl, and Mr. William Earnshaw. In regard to the appointment of the four first named there is practically no serious criticism, and it is, we think, generally recognised that they are reasonable and legitimate appointments. The same can certainly not be said of the 'call' to Mr. Earnshaw. There is no law limiting the Government's power of 'call' to the Upper House; but it is generally understood that to be eligible for appointment to the Council a person should at least have some sort of standing with the general public, that he should, within a reasonably recent period, have taken some part in public life, or have rendered some sort of service, however modest, to the community, and that he should be well and honorably known as a good citizen. Mr. Earnshaw certainly does not fulfil all of these conditions, and it can hardly be said that he fulfils any one of them. He was returned to Parliament in 1890 and again in 1893 as a Labor member. But during the currency of the latter Parliament he deserted Mr. Seddon—one of the best friends that Labor ever had—and transferred his allegiance to Sir Robert Stout: and he was, in consequence, rejected with emphasis at

Taxi Cabs for Hire

F. G. BUTLER, WELLINGTON.

These two cabs—71 and 97—can be had at any time by telephoning to 59 or 2707, day or night. Wedding and other parties specially catered for. Comfortable, clean, and speedy.